

SECRET

26 February 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger  
Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs

SUBJECT : Analysis of the Population of "C" Hamlets

In response to a request from Mr. Sansom of the NSC Staff's Program Analysis Group, we have prepared a chart and a table portraying the "GVN-controlled" proportion of South Vietnam's population under two alternate modes of treating the population in "C" hamlets. Two copies of this chart, table and a short explanatory note on both are attached hereto. Our views on the "C" hamlet question and how it should be handled are set forth in further detail in our 7 February Response to the Questions on Vietnam Posed in National Security Study Memorandum Number 1, under Question XVI.

George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

**Attachments**

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**Distribution:**

Orig. - Addressee (via Morton H. Halperin, National Security Staff,  
as Kissinger out of country) w/atts

1 - GAC Chrono w/atts ✓

1 - [ ] w/atts

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Criteria for "C" Population

1. Attached is a chart and a table portraying "GVN-controlled" population of South Vietnam under two alternative criteria. What is indicated as the standard criterion is that which is in use by USMACV and, until this month, was normally released to the press. Under this standard, all "A", "B", and "C" category population as well as the urban, or non-hamlet population, is considered to be under GVN control.

2. The exact status of "C" hamlets and their population has long been a source of disagreement among pacification analysts. Clearly under some circumstances a "C" hamlet was not a safe place to live in; a reading of the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) description of a "C" hamlet would verify this impression. The weighting involved in the HES scoring system, however, tended to offset the impact of Communist activities through the impact of our own. When we were particularly active in a hamlet -- in development projects or in socio-economic affairs -- a hamlet could readily receive an overall "C" rating even though it were under constant Communist harassment.

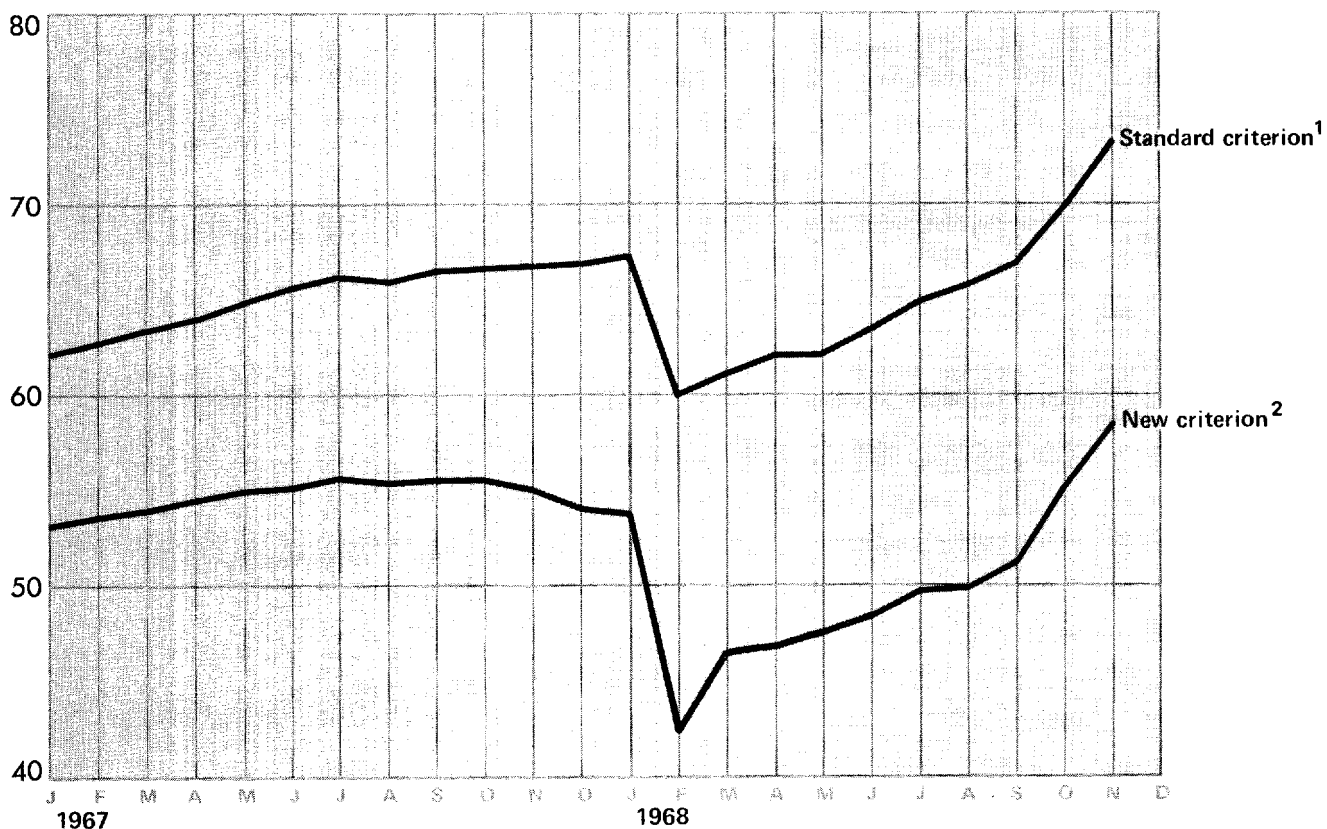
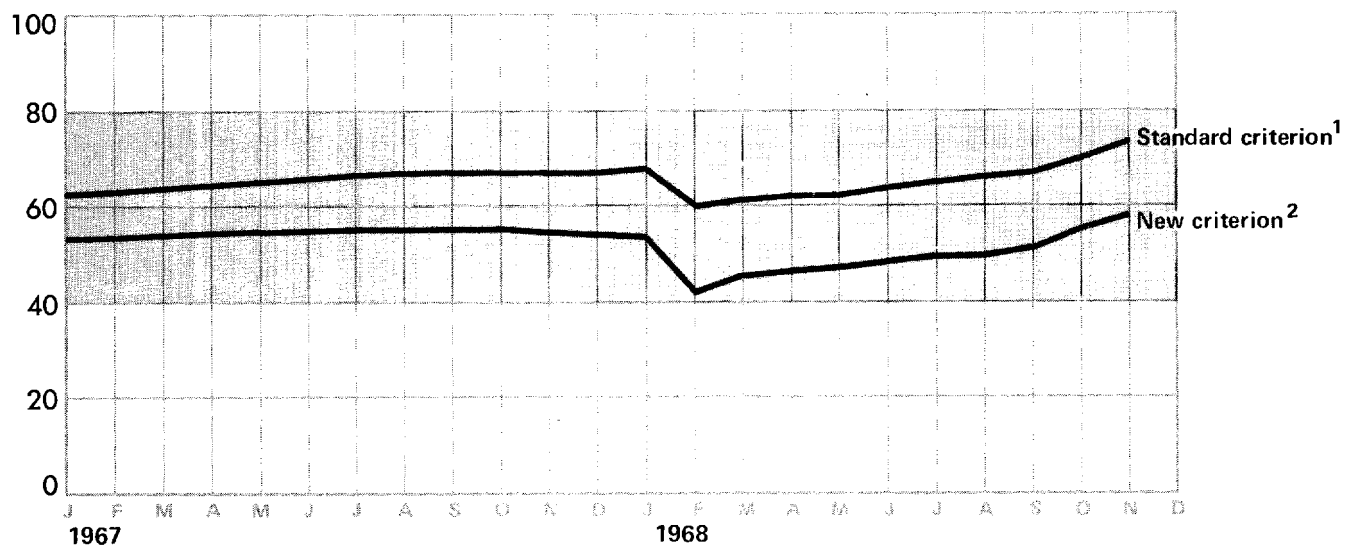
3. The new criterion, as shown in the attached table and chart, attempts to establish a more accurate threshold for "GVN control." Each "C" hamlet was examined to see if substantial ("D" or "E") levels of Communist military or political activity existed. The hamlets that contained this level of Communist activity were subtracted from the "GVN-controlled" category and placed in the "contested" category -- which more accurately describes their status.

4. In November 1968 -- the latest HES data available for computer processing at this time -- there were 3,775 "C" hamlets with a total of 5,018,700 population. Of this total, 1,689 hamlets (2,552,704 people) were found to have substantial Communist military or political activity. When these people were subtracted from the "GVN-controlled" category, it reduced that percentage from 73.3 percent to 58.7 percent of a total population of 17,476,900 people in South Vietnam.

5. If one substitutes "substantial influence" for "controlled," the percentage of 58.7 percent probably represents an accurate estimate of the current status of population in South Vietnam. The gap between the standard and the new criteria, however, is in many respects a measure of the credibility of HES. When that gap grows, as it did in the latter part of 1967, the relationship between the level of "GVN-controlled" population and what is really happening in the countryside becomes severely strained. Since the Tet offensive of 1968, the gap between the standard and the new criteria has remained fairly stable, but continued use of the old criterion tends to discount the substantial Communist potential in rural areas. The recent decision of President Thieu to increase the gap -- by lumping all categories of hamlets except "VC" into "GVN-controlled" -- cannot be expected to improve the credibility of the HES system.

#### Attachments

# GVN - CONTROLLED POPULATION (%)



**CONFIDENTIAL**  
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1. Includes "A", "B", and "C" hamlet populations and secure, non-hamlet population.
2. Includes "A" and "B" hamlet populations, secure non-hamlet populations, and only that population in "C" hamlets not subject to "D" or "E" levels of military/political activity on the part of the VC.

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## GVN - Controlled Population (7.)

	<u>Standard Criterion</u>	<u>1./</u>	<u>New Criterion</u>	<u>2./</u>
1967 Jan	62.2		53.2	
Feb	62.8		53.6	
Mar	63.3		54.0	
Apr	64.0		54.5	
May	64.9		55.0	
Jun	65.6		55.1	
Jul	66.1		55.7	
Aug	65.9		55.4	
Sep	66.5		55.6	
Oct	66.6		55.6	
Nov	66.7		55.0	
Dec	66.9		54.0	
1968 Jan	67.2		53.8	
Feb	59.8		42.3	
Mar	61.0		45.6	
Apr	62.0		46.9	
May	62.0		47.5	
Jun	63.3		48.4	
Jul	64.9		49.8	
Aug	65.8		49.9	
Sep	66.8		51.1	
Oct	69.8		55.2	
Nov	73.3		58.7	
Dec	76.3		N.A.	

1./ Standard criterion for "GVN" - "Controlled" population includes all "A", "B", & "C" hamlet populations and secure, non-hamlet (urban) population.

2./ New criterion for "GVN" - "Controlled" population includes all "A", "B" hamlet populations; secure, non-hamlet (urban) population, & only that population of "C" hamlets not subject to "D" or "E" levels of VC military/political activity.

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26 Feb. 1969

**Mr. Richard Moose  
The White House**

After we talked I had a call from Morton Halpern who said he was the one working on the "C" hamlet problem and asked that I send the material directly to him. This was done but attached hereto for your information is a copy of my note to Dr. Kissinger plus one copy of the attachment package thereto.

**George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs**

**Attachment**

GAC:taw:26Feb69

Orig. - Addressee w/copy of Kissinger memo & atts

1 - GAC Chrono

1 -

25X1

26 Feb. 1969

**Col. Robert E. Pursley**  
**Executive Assistant to the**  
**Secretary of Defense**

Per our conversation on 26 February,  
attached is a note I sent to Dr. Kissinger  
on the "C" hamlet problem together with  
one copy of the attachments thereto.

**George A. Carver, Jr.**  
**Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs**

**Attachment**

taw:26Feb69

Orig. - Addressed to Frank Hand (inner enveloped for  
Col. Pursley) w/copy of memo to Kissinger & atts

1 -  Chrono  
1 -